

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1, -3, 6, 11 and 14 are amended.

Specification

The Abstract has been amended in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

By this Amendment, claims 1-3, 6, 11, and 14 have been amended to clarify the claims and should now be allowable.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Asano (U.S. Patent No. 6,390,557), Hosokawa (U.S. Patent No. 6,910,737), Eskai et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,820,937), and Uramichi (U.S. Patent No. 6,758,525), collectively, "The References."

Independent claims 1, 3, 6, and 11 teach a reclining mechanism wherein the pawls are arranged and constructed so as to *not simultaneously* begin to move and to *not simultaneously* engage the ratchet. For example, claim 1 is directed to a reclining mechanism "wherein at least one of the pawls is moved prior to the other of the pawls when each of said pawls moves from said free position to said locking position." Independent claims 3, 6 and 11 contain similar

language teaching a reclining mechanism wherein the pawls are arranged and constructed so as to not simultaneously begin to move and to not simultaneously engage the ratchet.

Similarly, independent claim 14 teaches a locking method wherein the pawls are arranged and constructed to *not simultaneously* begin to move and to *not simultaneously* engage the ratchet.

None of The References teach a reclining mechanism or a locking method wherein the pawls are arranged and constructed to not simultaneously begin to move and to not simultaneously engage the ratchet. In all of The References, the pawls are arranged and constructed so as to simultaneously begin to move and simultaneously engage the ratchet. Accordingly, Applicant believes claims 1, 3, 6, 11, and 14 are patentable over The References, and Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the §102 rejection to these claims.

Since claims 2, 4, 5, 7-10, 12 and 13 depend from the independent claims, withdrawal of the §102 rejection to these claims is also respectfully requested.

New Claims

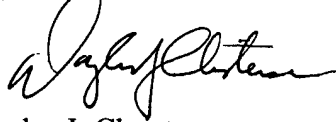
New claims 15-17 have been added. None of the cited references, alone or combined, teach, suggest or motivate the subject matter of claims 15-17. As such Applicant respectfully requests favorable consideration and prompt allowance of new claims 15-17.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner believes it would be useful to advance prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Douglas J. Christensen', written in a cursive style.

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